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In His 2d Term, He Is Reagan the Liberated

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WASHINGTON, March 10 — For President Reagan, the start of a second term has proved buoyant and, according to many of his aides, liberating.

Within the last month, Mr. Reagan has increased his appearances and intensified his blunt oratory on a range of issues that seem to merge into a blur: the budget, his veto of emergency credit loans to farmers, tax simplification, the MX missile, military spending, "Star Wars," aid to the rebels in Nicaragua.

"He's liberated, he wants to get into the fight, he feels strongly and wants to push his program through himself," said a ranking White House aide. "Reagan never quite believed his popularity before the election, never believed the polls. Now he has it, and he's going to push for it."

Another official remarked, "The President's not afraid now that he's going to lay out some booby trap that would spring up and be thrown at us in the next Presidential election."

"We all feel liberated," this official added. "I'm not afraid. We don't have to be deathly afraid of the political minefields, and we can push ahead with our agenda."

Contemplating His Legacy

Aides say Mr. Reagan is contemplating his legacy and yearning to leave a more profound imprint on American domestic and foreign policy than any other chief executive since Franklin D. Roosevelt. And he is plainly convinced that the next few months are perhaps the most pivotal of his entire Presidency.

Moreover, the shape of his agenda and speeches has been absorbed by an entirely new White House team. The new aides, headed by Donald T. Regan, chief of staff, seem far less intent on muting Mr. Reagan's oratory and, essentially, shielding him than was the former team.

The former group was headed by James A. Baker 3d, who exchanged jobs with Mr. Regan and took over the Treasury Department, and it included Richard G. Darman, a Presidential assistant who also moved to the Treasury, and Michael K. Deaver, a long-time Reagan aide who is scheduled to leave this spring for a public relations job.

"Don Regan basically reinforces the President," said a White House official. "He says, 'Mr. President, you can do this, you can do that.' Baker and Deaver and Darman did the exact opposite. They used to tone Reagan down."

The official noted that Mr. Reagan's

speeches in the first term were largely supervised by such Republican moderates as David R. Gergen, former head of communications, and Mr. Darman. Now, the speeches are largely under the control of Patrick J. Buchanan, the conservative columnist and author who recently returned to Government to take the job formerly held by Mr. Gergen.

"Gergen and Darman used to tone the speeches down," said a White House aide. "Now the speechwriters write the rhetoric up. They know Buchanan will add more spice."

Some White House officials say they are concerned about Mr. Reagan's speeches because, under Mr. Darman, the preparation of the drafts

involved often sharp internal policy debate involving the ideological and political factions operating beside Mr. Reagan. Now the debates are far more restrained, almost muted.

Beyond the tone of Mr. Reagan's speeches and comments, White House officials say a quiet and fundamental rightward shift seems to be gathering in the West Wing. And Mr. Reagan is delighted about it.

An example of the current mood is a good-natured joke in which Edward J. Rollins, a shrewd tactician who was recently named head of White House political and governmental affairs, was termed "the house liberal." Mr. Rollins, who was national director of Mr. Reagan's re-election

campaign, is highly popular in conservative circles.

Whatever the ideological changes within the White House, Mr. Reagan has told aides that he is convinced that 1985 is crucial, perhaps the crucial year of his Presidency.

"The point is, Reagan's determined not to become a lame duck, that's the message he's sending," an aide said. He cited Mr. Reagan's sharply worded veto Wednesday of emergency farm legislation as well as the tough language used by the White House Friday to criticize the Republican-controlled Senate Budget Committee for rejecting Reagan proposals to end Federal subsidies for Amtrak and mass transit.

"We see these as the first tests," the aide said. "If we don't play the tough guy we'll be run over. If we don't stick to our guns, we'll face problems for the next four years."

'This Is the Time'

Another official said: "There's the belief now that if we're going to get things done, 1985 is the year to do it. Sure the rhetoric's tougher. But the priority with this group as well as the Baker group is still the same: to get the program through. This is the time."

Coupled with his determination to limit the expansion of Government and, as he has said, "change the course of our nation's history," the President has loosed a wave of oratory endorsing Nicaraguan rebels as "our brothers" and the "moral equal of our Founding Fathers." In the first news conference of his second term on Feb. 21, he said his goal was the removal of the "present structure" of the Sandinista Government.

If some moderate Republicans are uneasy about Mr. Reagan's oratory on Nicaragua — "he practically declared war over television," complained a well-placed Republican close to the White House — conservatives point out with delight that the President's sharp words have rippled across the entire Administration. Secretary of State George P. Shultz recently said that if more aid was denied to the rebels, or "contras" as they are known, Nicaragua would fall into "the endless darkness of Communist tyranny."

One White House official said: "In the old days you'd have, maybe, Jeane Kirkpatrick and William Casey talking about aid to the contras, and Reagan himself would be discouraged from doing just that. Now you have Reagan making these very blunt, direct speeches and George Shultz weighing in, too. He never spoke that way before."